

April 9, 2012

**Honorable Chairman and Members of the
Hermosa Beach Planning Commission**

**Regular Meeting of
April 17, 2012**

SUBJECT: SLOPE AND GRADE HEIGHT DETERMINATION S-21 #3

LOCATION: 714 MARLITA PLACE

APPLICANT: CHARLES BELAK-BERGER OF CBB ARCHITECTS
AND WILLIAM CAMPBELL
521 W. ROSECRANS
GARDEN, CA 90248

OWNER: DONNA EPPERLY TRUST
714 MARLITA PLACE
HERMOSA BEACH, 90254

REQUEST: TO DETERMINE WHETHER ALTERNATIVE SPOT ELEVATIONS RATHER THAN
PROPERTY CORNER ELEVATIONS AT THE REAR/SOUTHERLY PORTION OF THE
PROPERTY CAN BE USED AS A BASIS FOR DETERMINING BUILDING HEIGHT.

Recommendation:

To direct staff as deemed appropriate by minute order, from the following alternatives:

1. Interpolate the grade from corner points only
2. Interpolate from points on the top of the slope, as proposed by the applicant.

Background:

The applicant is requesting to use points on the east and west sides of the site, rather than the rear property corners, because of unusual conditions. The applicant is requesting to use the existing surface elevations at the top of the bank rather than the property corners identified in the topographic survey.

The subject lot is one of four properties on Marlita Place, located at the southeast corner of the T-head turn-around. The lot, like others on the subject block, is fairly flat and has a consistent slope of approximately 1%, but the elevation slopes down steeply along approximately the rear 15 feet of the lot and along its eastern edge where it abuts the commercial alley to the east.

The property is located south of 30th Street and abuts commercial uses along Pacific Coast Highway to the east. The property is located within the R-1 zone with a maximum height limit of 25-feet. The subject property is over 9,000 square feet which is consistent with prevailing lot sizes for this neighborhood. The applicant desires to construct a new single family residence with an attached garage.

Analysis:

Pursuant to the definitions of 'building height' and 'grade' and the method for calculating building height as set forth in Municipal Code Sections 17.04.040 and 17.46.015, grade used for height measurements is based on the surveyed elevation points at the property corners. However, the method for determining building height does allow consideration of other points along or in the vicinity of the property line or property corners and consideration of convex contours. In these situations, alternate points can be used if the evidence supports that these best represent a natural or unaltered condition. In cases where the datum for height measurement is

disputed, the final determination of the grade is referred to the Planning Commission. In this case staff agrees that alternative points can be used, based on the limited evidence and prior Planning Commission interpretation for neighboring properties (702 Marlita Place and 712 Marlita Place).

The applicant is requesting to use alternative points at the existing surface at the top of the steep bank at the rear portion of the property and along the east property line as the basis for measuring height, rather than the southwest, southeast and northeast property corners identified in the topographic survey.

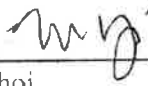
The applicant proposes to use the existing top of finished surface elevation at 99.39' approximately 16 feet from the southeast property corner, rather than the corner elevation of 89.72'. The applicant also proposes to use the existing top of finished surface elevation of 99.87' approximately 13.5' from the southwest property corner, rather than 91.82' at the corner. The applicant's reasoning for the request is because of the abrupt slope changes at the rear and side property lines are likely the result of the cut conditions for the nearby retaining walls to support leveling the alley along the commercial property to the east.

If height measurement is based on interpolated grade from property corner elevations, future improvements will likely be limited to a single-story at the rear half of the lot unless the first floor is lowered substantially, but the building may then exceed driveway slope allowances.

In June 2002, the Planning Commission considered a similar request for 702 Marlita Place (3 lots to the west) and determined that top of bank elevations should be used for measurement of height rather than the south property corner elevation points. The June 18, 2002 staff report also referenced the use of alternative points along the top of the bank for 712 Marlita Place (to the immediate west of subject property) for construction of a new single family residence in 1997.

Based on prior determinations for properties on the Marlita Place and limited evidence supporting use of alternative points at the top of the bank, Staff believes the request may be reasonable in reflecting the abrupt change from flat to sloping terrain which appears to represent the natural terrain at the top of the bank with the abrupt change likely being the result of cut conditions for the retaining walls at the toe of the slope.

CONCUR:



Eva Choi
Assistant Planner



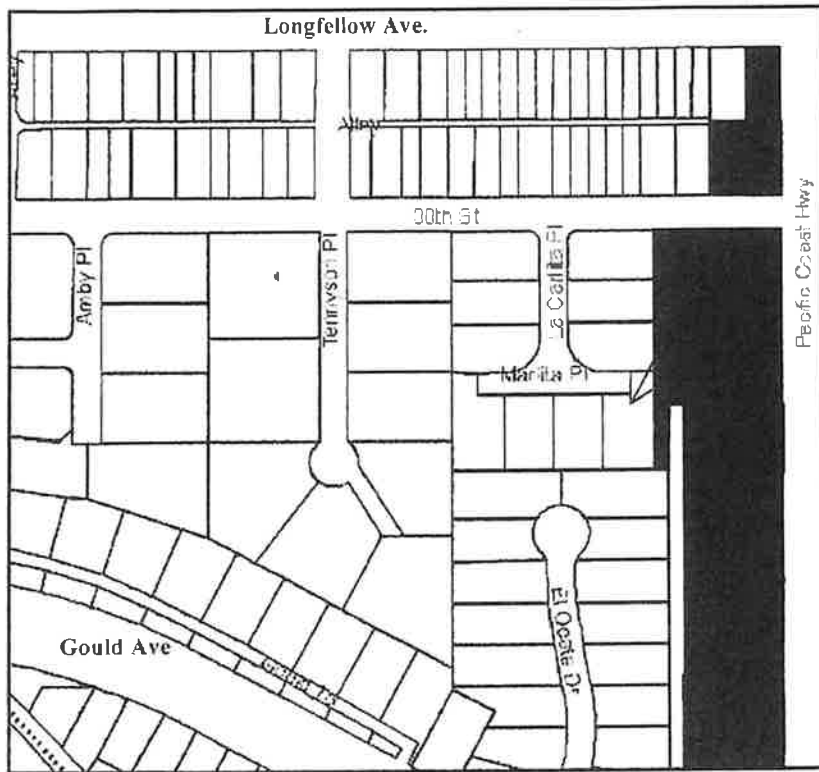
Ken Robertson, Director
Community Development Department

Attachments

1. Location Map
2. Poster verification
3. Relevant Code Sections
4. 702 Marlita Place staff report/minutes dated 06/18/02
5. Property survey, profile and photo

F:\B95\CD\PC\2012\04-17-12\Slope Determination 714 Marlita Pl.doc

Attachment 1 Location Map



ZONING DESIGNATIONS

- R-1 ONE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
- R-1A LIMITED ONE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
- R-2 TWO-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
- R-2B LIMITED MULTIPLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
- R-2B/OS-O LIMITED MULTIPLE FAMILY OPEN SPACE OVERLAY
- R-3 MULTIPLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
- R-3/OS-O MULTIPLE FAMILY OPEN SPACE OVERLAY
- R-P RESIDENTIAL-PROFESSIONAL
- RPD RESIDENTIAL PLANNED DEVELOPMENT
- R-3PD MULTIPLE FAMILY PLANNED DEVELOPMENT
- C-1 NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL
- C-3 RESTRICTED COMMERCIAL
- C-3 GENERAL COMMERCIAL
- M-1 LIGHT MANUFACTURING
- OS OPEN SPACE
- OS-1 RESTRICTED OPEN SPACE
- OS-2 RESTRICTED OPEN SPACE